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ABSTRACT

The question of whether noncredit, continuing education courses at the college level compete with or complement credit offerings is considered, based on surveys at Lakeland Community College (Ohio) and Lee College (Texas). For Lakeland College, there was some potential competition from noncredit classes in specific subjects. Lakeland Community College tests innovative courses through lifelong learning, and then converts the successful courses to credit offerings. At Lee College, most courses are not converted to credit classes. Potential competition between credit and noncredit programs was identified by the research, including noncredit students who would enroll in credit classes if that were all that were available to them. Continuing education was found to positively affect students' attitudes toward further learning, and a large majority said noncredit classes had increased the likelihood of their taking credit courses in the future. Information is presented on: reasons for enrolling in continuing education, reasons for selecting courses, how students first learned about the programs, credit versus noncredit choices, and demographic characteristics of the student respondents. The questionnaire is appended. (SW)

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CONTINUING EDUCATION: COMPETITION OR COMPLEMENT TO CREDIT INSTRUCTION

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Continuing Education: Competition or Complement to Credit Instruction

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PART I: LITERATURE

As the proportion of adult part-time students has increased over the past decade and a half, and the number of traditional full-time students has decreased, competition for adult students has become keener. From 1972 to 1978 the percentage of students above the age of 25 enrolled in colleges and universities increased by 25.3% to a level of one-third of total enrollments. In 1970, 32% of students were part-time while in 1979, 41% were part-timers and of these, two out of three were older than 25 years.[1]

The shift in the mission of many institutions of higher education from preparatory education to lifelong education occurred as institutions reacted to the dramatic drop in the traditional student market. The number of colleges and universities offering non-credit courses has more than doubled since 1968. Non-credit courses were offered by 1,102 institutions in 1968, by 2,225 in 1976, and by 2,285 in 1980 (72% of higher education institutions in the United States).[2] Competition between continuing education providers has expanded beyond traditional providers: colleges, universities, public school systems, professional associations, parks and recreation departments to classes offered by department stores, and corporations, among others.

While selective colleges have reacted to the contraction of their traditional markets by paying increasing attention to how students make choices between competing institutions, one way community colleges have reacted has been to expand the role of continuing education. Continuing education in community colleges fifteen years ago emphasized community service programs and remedial classes such as adult basic education. Intensive vocational instruction preparatory to employment, vocational courses designed to upgrade skills of those already in the labor market and to train career changers, is a relatively recent addition to most continuing education programs.

As the blurring of roles has occurred on community college campuses, competition has arisen between the vocational education and continuing education divisions for students. Students who wish short-term instruction in typing, word processing, and other work related skills are often faced with choosing between credit and non-credit courses. Yet, little attention has been paid to how growing numbers of adult learners decide whether to enroll in credit or non-credit classes.

Credit is not a salient attraction for growing numbers of adult students who may already have degrees. College graduates are five times more likely to participate in organized instruction as are high school dropouts. People 25 to 29 years of age are twice as likely to be high school graduates (85%) as people 60 years of age or older (42%).[3] Just as the proportion of high school graduates increases each decade, so, too, does the proportion of those with at least some college. These are the heavy users of higher education and the segment most continuing education administrators are seeking to increasingly attract.

COMPETITION: FUNDING ISSUES

Many state subsidy policies for adult continuing education were developed before "lifelong learning" became a reality. Typically these states partly subsidized such remedial programs as "English as a Second Language", high school equivalency preparation and adult basic education. Furthermore, most states expect learners to pick up the costs of recreational courses. Some states heavily subsidize vocational

job training, whereas continuing professional education is rarely subsidized. (Cross & McCartan)

Adult education programs within educational institutions generally obtain a much larger share of program expenses from student fees and tuition than do preparatory education or resident instruction programs (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1971). In community colleges, some mix of federal, state, and local taxes form the budget, with varying degrees of reliance on tuition income as an important source of revenue.

Credit and non-credit, campus and off-campus distinctions are often made with campus-based credit instruction being funded, while either non-credit or off-campus criteria are used to eliminate funding. A few states even use the time of day a class is offered, to limit subsidies to traditional day-time students. Many of these state policies were developed at a time when formal education was sought mostly by the young. Now, however, many state policy-makers continue to limit funding based on these criteria to minimize the financial impact of adult learning on the state. When states face economic problems, they often: reduce subsidies by initiating course approval systems setting up a minimum number of clock hours (e.g. 10 is being considered in Texas at the current time, replacing no lower limits); specify of narrow target groups by vocation; and even threaten to eliminate approval of a program or course when a similar course or program has been earlier approved for funding at the same institution, thereby setting up direct competition between credit and non-credit programs.

Thus, institutions are faced with possible loss of state revenue when students register in unsubsidized classes (or in under-subidized ones as in Texas). The institution loses not only revenue of the greater subsidy, but can also, as in the case of Texas, lose that subsidy for two years in states with biennium budgets.

COMPLEMENT: REDUCING BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT

Continuing education reduces the barriers that deter adults from participating in organized education. Patricia Cross has described three categories of barriers: situational, dispositional and

institutional in her review of state and national studies of adult learners. (Cross, 1977)

Situational Barriers

Situational barriers are those arising from one's situation in life at a given time. Cost, including tuition, books, child care, etc. was cited by 53% of learners; while lack of time was cited by 46% of potential adult learners in most studies as a barrier to enrollment (Cross, 1977).[4]

Continuing education plays an important role in reducing the impact of these barriers. Yet, many states do not fund shorter than semester length credit classes. For many adult learners, time is more important than a subsidized fee. Many adults are willing to pay a higher cost per clock hour for intensive short-term instruction especially in work related subjects.

Institutional Barriers

Most continuing education administrators make concerted efforts to design their programs to minimize institutional barriers to learning. Patricia Cross defines these as institutional practices and procedures which exclude or discourage working adults from participating in educational activities. Such barriers are usually cited by 35% of adults who "don't want to go to school full time"; by 21% who "don't want to spend the amount of time required to complete a program"; "strict attendance requirement" - 15%; "too much red tape in getting enrolled - 10%;" and "don't meet the requirements to begin a program" - 6%.[5] *Continuing education administrators design their programs to reduce traditional institutional barriers to learning.*

Dispositional Barriers

Dispositional barriers are related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner. Adults with poor educational backgrounds or older adults typically cite such barriers. Seventeen percent said they were "afraid that I'm too old to begin" and 12% said "low grades in the past and lack of confidence in their ability" were barriers.[6]

Patricia Cross points out the real importance of dispositional barriers is probably underestimated by these surveys. Social desirability, coupled with a methodological problem when those who say

they are not interested in further learning are frequently dropped from further analysis, creates an underestimate of the impact of dispositional barriers.

Continuing education in community colleges typically has two major target markets. The first is those with dispositional barriers who lack the self-confidence to begin a program of study. For these persons, non-credit continuing education can serve as a first step back into formal education. The lack of grades, the ability to chose non-threatening avocational course content, the lack of entrance requirements, the ease of registration, all make continuing education a viable initiation into the educational environment on a positive note.

Due to the social desirability factor, little direct research into this phenomenon has been conducted. Certainly, much descriptive literature asserting the value of continuing education in reducing dispositional and institutional barriers is available. However, methodological problems have prevented many researchers from studying how many persons initially enroll in continuing education due to these perceived barriers in the credit program, and from studying the degree to which attendance in continuing education classes reduces an individual's sensitivity to such barriers. Additionally, methodology has prevented any real analysis of how many persons go on from continuing education to enroll in degree or certificate programs and how many complete such programs once enrolled.

The second major target market for community college continuing education is the relatively new one of already degreed adults who are truly "lifelong learners". They return to organized education repeatedly to learn new skills, for personal development or for recreation.

PART II: LAKELAND AND LEE SURVEY

A survey was designed at Lakeland Community College and first used there in Spring 1985. Results reported in this paper were obtained later by parallel studies conducted at Lee College in Baytown, Texas, and at Lakeland Community College in Mentor, Ohio in Fall of 1985.

At Lee, all continuing education students were asked to complete a survey at the end of each course. Students were asked to fill out only

one survey if they registered in multiple classes. Five hundred fifty-two surveys were completed.

At Lakeland, 500 surveys were mailed to randomly selected lifelong learning students: 114 were returned (response rate of 23%).

REASONS FOR ENROLLING

Patricia Cross (1977) in her analysis of state need assessments, found that interest in learning job-related skills is the most-cited reason for participation in adult education. Those who do not have good jobs wish them and those who do have good jobs, professionals and college graduates, seek advancement through continued learning.

This was the most cited reason for enrolling both at Lee and at Lakeland. "Licensure" could be added to "job related" since, in most cases, it is a condition employment.

Table 1: Reasons for Enrolling

	Lakeland (N=112)		Lee (N=450)	
Job	35.7%	40.2%	42.9%	74.2%
Licensure	4.5%		31.3%	
Obtain degree	6.3%		3.6%	
Earn Certification	3.6%		2.0%	
Personal Development	27.7%		12.4%	
Pursue Special Interest	11.6%		5.8%	
Get started in school	10.7%		1.1%	
Recreation	3.6%		2.9%	
Take a course	8.0%		1.0%	
Special course	1.0%		1.0%	

Patricia Cross found that men are more interested in job-related learning than women but 54% of courses women take are job related. (Cross, 1981). In the Lee/Lakeland study a higher percentage of men than women were enrolled in job-related classes, except when licensure is added. With the increased participation of women in the labor force, the gender gap might be expected to close.

Personal satisfaction has been given as a reason for wanting education by one-third of potential students in previous studies and has

been cited by more than half as "one" of the reasons for learning.[7] The results in the current study show about one-fifth of female and one-ninth of male respondents cited "personal development" as a reason to enroll at Lakeland or Lee. This may be due to some trend of diminishing emphasis on personal satisfaction, but is more likely attributable to the populations of the schools and differences in terminology. Cross notes those seeking education for personal satisfaction are those with no particular desire for economic or career advancement: older and retired persons, unemployed women, and the privileged classes. Neither Lee nor Lakeland attracts large numbers of such persons.

"To work towards a degree or certificate" is given as one reason by 8 to 28% of potential learners in various state studies.[8] In this study, only about 5% of respondents cited this as a reason for attendance. This is due to the lack of availability of credit for any continuing education courses at Lee and Lakeland.

In the Lakeland/Lee study only about 3% of respondents cited recreation or special interest as reasons for enrollment. Other studies have found that those most likely to be interested in hobbies and recreational subjects are mostly older people, and middle or lower income persons with socially isolated living conditions (Hamilton, 1976). Few such persons enroll at Lee or Lakeland.

More than half of the respondents indicated that they had enrolled at their respective institutions most recently for one of two reasons: "job related/professional development" (41.5%) and "licensure up-date" (26%). The third choice response in this category, "personal development" was chosen by 15.5% of the respondents. These are the most often cited reasons for enrolling in continuing education in most studies. The remaining choices received only limited response. It is noteworthy that only 1.6% of those surveyed indicated that they enrolled in a course due to a general interest in enrolling, followed by checking the class schedule and choosing course(s). Responses to this item differed significantly ($p \leq .0001$) by school. The most pronounced difference occurred with regard to the following response choices: "licensure up-date" (4.5% at Lakeland vs. 31.3% at Lee); this may be explained by the large number of students enrolled at Lee in daycare

classes specifically for licensure; "obtain a college degree or certificate" (6.3% at Lakeland compared to 3.6% at Lee); "personal development" (27.7% at Lakeland compared to 12.4% at Lee); "pursue special interest"(11.6% at Lakeland compared to 5.8% at Lee) and "get started in school again" (10.7% at Lakeland compared to 1.1% at Lee). Based upon responses to this item, it would appear that Lakeland non-credit students tend to be more interested in personal development and special interest courses, while non-credit students at Lee tend to have as a goal, the renewal of professional license and professional development. While students at both colleges ascribed some importance to professional development, the percentage of students indicating this as a reason for their enrollment, was greater at Lee College (43% compared with 36% at Lakeland). Finally, it is noteworthy that ten times as many respondents (on a percentage basis) at Lakeland indicated that getting started in school again was a motivation for their enrollment (10.7% compared to 1.1% at Lee).

SELECTION CRITERIA

Of the choices that respondents were given to "rate each of the following items according to its importance to you in selecting courses at Lakeland/Lee," more than half of those responding indicated that the following choices either specifically attracted them to the college or played a very important role in their attendance: "learning experience" - 80%; "fee level" - 55%; and "subject matter" - 56%. Other choices that received a sizeable response (more than 40%), rated them as specifically attracted or very attractive, included "duration of class" - 48%; "location where class meets" - 48%; "opportunity to practice going to school again" - 44%; "grading practices (or no grades) - 46% and "media describing this course/brochure" - 43%.

Table 2: Reasons for Selection

Specifically Attracted or Very Important

	Lakeland	Lee
Duration of Class	33%	52%
Location	35%	57%
Earn Credentials/Professional Up-Date	40%	32%
*Testing Process	15%	6%
Practice Going to School	14%	52%
Instructor Expectations	38%	59%
*Instructor Reputation	40%	17%
Registration Convenience	45%	17%
Learning Experience	68%	83%
College Degree Credit	20%	16%
Grading (No Grades)	16%	53%
Fee Level	33%	61%
Subject Matter	74%	53%
Media/Brochure	38%	45%
Media/Newspaper	12%	31%
Word of Mouth	27%	37%
Equipment Available	28%	12%
Registration by Employer	19%	6%
Class Schedule	49%	13%

*Low Response

Many of the responses to this item differed significantly by school. Following is a break-down by school of the significant differences:

Duration of Class: specifically or very attractive to 52% at Lee and only to 33% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 8% at Lee and to 30% at Lakeland ($p \leq .0001$). This result may be explained by heavy enrollment at Lee in daycare workshops, defensive driving classes and other very short-term classes required to keep the student's

professional or driver's licenses. Important in clerical, driving & swimming classes.

Location where Class Met: specifically or very attractive to 57% at Lee and only 35% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 8% at Lee and 26% at Lakeland ($p \leq .00001$). This may be attributable to Lee's recent entry into some locally competive continuing education markets (i.e., daycare; defensive driving; etc.) for which students previously had to travel long distances to another community college. It further likely reflects Lee's use of a popular off-campus site where parking is especially convenient. Location was most important in small business, art/music, investments, clerical, driving, and daycare.

Earn/Maintain Credentials/Professional Update: specifically or very attractive to 32% at Lee and 40% at Lakeland but specifically attractive to 21% at Lee and only 11% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 45% at Lee and 35% at Lakeland (but unimportant to 10% at Lee and 21% at Lakeland,)($p \leq .00001$). Most important in small business, real estate, and health technology.

Media Describing This Course/Brochure: specifically or very attractive to 45% at Lee and 38% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 8% at Lee and 26% at Lakeland ($p \leq .00001$). Important in real estate, professional development, clerical, and swimming classes.

Opportunity to Practice Going to School Again: specifically or very attractive to 52% at Lee and only 14% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 17% at Lee and 45% at Lakeland ($p \leq .00001$). Most important in small business, clerical, and swimming classes.

Instructor Expectations: specifically or very attractive to 59% at Lee and 38% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 20% at Lee and 25% at Lakeland; moderately important to 22% at Lee and 37% at Lakeland. ($p = \leq .01$). Important in small business, real estate, and health technology.

Learning Experience: specifically or very attractive to 83% at Lee and 68% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 2% at Lee and 5% at Lakeland moderately important to 4% at Lee and 13% at Lakeland ($p \leq = .0002$). Important to over 50% in all but: investments, fitness, personal development, health technology, labor studies, and dance.

Grading Practices or No Grades: specifically or very attractive to 53% at Lee and 16% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 22% at Lee and 48% at Lakeland ($p \leq$ =.00001). Important in investments, clerical and driving.

Fee Level: specifically or very attractive to 61% at Lee and 33% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 11% at Lee and 20% at Lakeland; moderately important to 11% at Lee and 33% at Lakeland ($p \leq$ =.00001). Important in art/music, clerical, driving, swimming, and college for kids.

Special Topic/Subject Matter: specifically or very attractive to 53% at Lee and 74% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 3% at Lee and to 4% at Lakeland; moderately important to 28% at Lee and 11% at Lakeland ($p \leq$ =.0004). Important in all but: clerical, driving, health technology, daycare, and labor studies.

Media - Newspaper Articles: specifically or very attractive to 31% at Lee and 12% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 46% at Lee and 68% at Lakeland ($p \leq$ = .0009). Not of major importance to over 50% in any category.

Word of Mouth - Instructor or Student: specifically or very important to 37% at Lee and 27% at Lakeland; of minor or no importance to 34% at Lee and to 56% at Lakeland ($p \leq$ =.01). Not of major importance to over 50% in any category.

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Table 3: Students Who Listed Criteria for Selection

(Over 50% selected "specifically attracted me" or "very important") by Type of Course Taken

Learning Experience	Subject/ Topic	Class Schedule	Fees	Location	Instructor Reputation	Media/ Brochures	Duration/ Time	Licensure/ Credentials Update	Practice School	Instructor Expectation	Registration	Grading	Equipment	
X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X			X	Small Business
X	X	X			X	X		X		X	X			Real Estate
X	X	X				X							X	Professional Development
X	X	X											X	Personal Computers
X	X		X	X	X									Art/Music
	X	X		X							X	X		Investments
X	X	X												Special Interest
X	X													Cooking
	X													Fitness
	X										X			Personal Development
X	X				X									Other
X			X	X		X	X		X			X		Clerical
X			X	X			X					X		Driving
					X			X		X	X			Health Technology
X	X		X			X	X		X					Swimming
X	X		X								X			College for Kids
X				X										Day Care
		X												Labor
	X													Dance

HOW STUDENTS FIRST LEARNED ABOUT PROGRAMS

Responses to "how did you first learn about this program at Lakeland/Lee College," were largely scattered and undifferentiated among the response choices. The most popular mechanism through which respondents indicated learning about the program was the class schedule received in the mail (about 16%). About 6.5% of those surveyed indicated learning about the program through special brochures, followed by Lakeland/Lee instructor or student (5.2%). Other response choices were identified only rarely (ranging from a response of 3.3% to less than 1%). What is noteworthy about this item, is the large number of Lee respondents who failed to answer this question (71.3%). It is important to remember that a sample of students was surveyed at Lakeland, while the entire continuing education population at Lee was surveyed. Results on this question may be affected by sampling differences used by the two institutions.

An alternative explanation is that Lee College uses multiple methods of marketing, emphasizing class schedules; special brochures for business, computer, and daycare classes; press releases for new or special courses and many feature articles in the local paper each semester. Lakeland relies most heavily on class schedules and does not use newspapers extensively. With so much marketing "noise" it is probable that Lee students have difficulty remembering just how they first heard of a course.

Of those respondents who answered this item, the choices in rank order were about the same for the two institutions. Lakeland students chose, in order, class schedule, special brochures mailed, and friend or relative. Lee students chose class schedule, friend or relative and special brochures mailed.

COURSES TAKEN

The courses offered by Lakeland and Lee are not parallel. Lakeland offers courses and programs not offered by Lee: labor studies, women's interest (courses of interest to women at Lee were described in other ways on the Lee survey) real estate, library related, writing, tax (offered at Lee only in spring semester), college for kids (program has just begun at Lee after the survey), senior citizen (served in a special program at Lee that was not surveyed), health technology, health care,

art/music (except for piano and guitar), law enforcement. Many of these courses were of strong interest to Lakeland students: labor studies 5.7%; professional development/job skills 5.3%; real estate 4.4%; women's interest 5.3% and special interest 4.4%. Courses offered by both schools included personal computers/word processing 1.8% at Lakeland compared to 3.3% at Lee; cooking: 1.8% at Lakeland compared to 4.7% at Lee.

CREDIT vs. NON-CREDIT CHOICES

Most students had taken a course before at their respective institution, almost two-thirds (63% at Lakeland and 61% at Lee). Of these, about 40% indicated having taken a credit course in the past, compared to 60% who had taken a non-credit course. Responses to this item were very different for the two schools (p .005). At Lakeland, about half of the respondents had taken a credit course in the past, compared to only 36% of the Lee College respondents. Similarly, almost 59% of the Lakeland respondents indicated having taken at least one non-credit course, compared to only 38% of the Lee College group.

Of those repondents who had taken non-credit courses at their respective schools previously, most indicated having taken 1-3 courses (33% at Lakeland and 37% at Lee). Those students in the total survey group who indicated having taken credit courses previously most often indicated having taken fewer than 15 credit hours (22.1%) followed by 46 or more credits (13.7%) and 16-45 credits (13.3%).

Almost two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they would have, or might have, taken the non-credit courses in which they were enrolled on a credit basis, if credit had been the only option (47% - yes vs. 26% - maybe). About one in four respondents (26.7%) indicated that they would not have taken the course on a credit basis. It must be remembered that this question made credit/non-credit the only variables, when in reality, credit classes have some characteristics that constitute disincentives: higher fees (for all credit classes at Lee); semester length classes(at Lee). Some of the drop-out problems for some colleges may be attributable to adult non-degree seeking students who sit in a class just long enough to learn the basics and then leave, or who get discouraged with the pace of credit classes.

While Lee students were slightly less inclined to indicate a willingness to take the course on a credit basis, differences between the schools were not found to be statistically significant on this item.

Respondents largely indicated that their non-credit experience(s) positively influenced their desire and confidence to learn. For example, more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that the non-credit experience increased their confidence in their ability to study and learn, compared to only 13.4% who answered the item negatively. Almost 86% of the respondents indicated the non-credit experience either might have, or definitely did, increase their curiousity to discover/explore ideas in other courses (only 15.1% responded negatively). Finally, almost 75% of the respondents indicated the non-credit experience either might have or definitely would, increase the likelihood of their taking credit courses in the future while 25.7% responded negatively.

Of these three items, responses by school differed significantly only on the first (confidence in ability to study and learn ($p \leq .005$). Twice as many Lee respondents answered the item "yes, a great deal" (42% compared to 21% at Lakeland). Conversely, almost twice as many Lakeland students answered "no, not at all" (18% compared to 10% at Lee). In addition, more students at Lakeland indicated "no opinion" (20% compared to 18%) and slightly more Lakeland students answered, "yes, somewhat" (33% compared to 29%).

The vast majority of respondents (87.4%) indicated that they were not currently taking a college credit course. Fewer than half (41.1%) of those surveyed at both colleges indicated checking the schedule of credit courses offered. Slightly more (47%) considered enrolling in a credit course offered. Responses to these items differed significantly by school. At Lakeland, more students checked the schedule of credit offerings (55% compared to 38% at Lee; $p \leq .009$), yet more students at Lee considered enrolling in one or more credit courses (48% compared to 36% at Lakeland). It is noteworthy that almost three times as many Lakeland students are currently enrolled in credit offerings as are Lee students (20% vs. 7% $p \leq .003$), yet more Lee students considered enrolling in credit courses. Based upon the data of this survey, it appears that non-credit students at Lakeland College have a greater

propensity to enroll, and are more likely to have already enrolled, in credit courses than are non-credit students at Lee College. This finding may be partially attributable to student characteristics. One factor influencing these results is the lack of a credit child care program at Lee College. Of the large numbers of continuing eduation students at Lee enrolled in daycare classes, some would probably prefer credit classes.

Almost 70% of all students surveyed indicated an interest in other kinds of courses currently offered at Lakeland/Lee. While Lee students were slightly more inclined to answer this item affirmatively, differences on this item by school were not found to be statistically significant. About two-thirds of those surveyed indicated they would either possibly (39.6%) or certainly (26.6%) enroll in a future course of interest if it is only offered for college credit, compared to 33.9% who indicated that they would not enroll in a future course on a credit basis. Once again, Lakeland students indicated a greater willingness to explore credit options. Lakeland students answering "yes" outnumbered Lee students by a ratio of 41.3% to 22.6% ($p \leq .0001$). While more Lee students answered "maybe" 42.7%, compared to 27.9% at Lakeland, Lee students answering "no" also outnumbered Lakeland students (34.7% compared to 30.8%).

Answers to: "Will you take another non-credit course after this class?" were relatively evenly distributed between the three response choices for the survey group as a whole. About 2 in 5 students (39.5%) answered this question "yes", while about as many students answered "don't know" (37%). More than twenty-three percent answered "no". Lakeland students displayed a greater interest than Lee students, in taking a future non-credit courses. Lakeland students answering this item "yes" outnumbered Lee students: 42% to 38%, while Lee students who answered "no" far outnumbered Lakeland students (27% compared to 8%). More Lakeland students (49% vs. 33%) answered "don't know" ($p \leq .0001$). Some of this is due to Lee College's large defensive driving program; most participants are taking the class after receiving a traffic citation so they do not want to repeat the experience.

Consistent with these results, when asked, "Do you intend to take a credit course in the future?" there was a significant difference in

answers from the two schools. While for the survey group as a whole, responses were fairly evenly distributed (about 25% "yes", 32% "no" and 23% "don't know," far more Lakeland students answered positively (37% compared to 25% at Lee), while far more Lee students were negative (33% compared to 7% at Lakeland; $p \leq .00001$). However, responses to the follow-up question: "Will you consider it?" shows a majority of Lee students who answered it said yes: 54% "yes", 19% "no", 27% "maybe" (155 respondents did not answer).

When answers to which course students were taking, were compared with their answers to whether they intended to take or would even consider, credit classes, significant differences were found by course taken. Seventy-five percent of the real estate enrollees said they would take credit classes (only Lakeland offers non-credit real estate classes).

In swimming, more than 75% would consider credit if it were only offered that way, but more than 50% do not intend to take credit classes. Lee College may have many students registered in credit physical fitness classes who would normally prefer to take continuing education classes if they were offered.

More than 50% do not intend to take and will not consider credit for senior citizen activities or personal development classes.

Lakeland students (75%) intend to take credit classes or would consider them in: real estate, professional development, law enforcement, foreign language, women's interest, and special interest. Most of these students might be willing to take credit courses if approximately similar courses were offered for credit. It is unknown how situational and institutional barriers such as length of credit classes, etc., might affect their willingness to attend these classes.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC OF LAKELAND AND LEE NON-CREDIT STUDENTS

Sex

Lee College has a higher proportion of female students than Lakeland, 78% vs. 63%. When asked to rate various factors as to importance in selecting courses, convenience of registration was somewhat more important to women than to men: 28% said it specifically

attracted them to the colleges or it was "very important" while only 16% of the males rated it that important.

Women were also found to be more sensitive to media than men. When asked how they first learned about the program, more females cited "brochure available in the community": 3.4% (females) vs. .8% (males); "newspaper/radio/t.v.: 3.9% (females) vs. 1% (males). Teachers/counselor was also more often mentioned by women than by men 2.6% (females) vs. 0% (males).

Men tended to have earned more credit hours than women: only 15% of the males had less than 15 hours compared to 24% of the females; 19% of the males had over 46 credit hours while only 12% of the females had that many.

Gender differences were found in topics of enrollment. Men were predominant in the following courses: Labor Studies (80%) and Investments (67%), women were predominant in Cooking (96%) Daycare (88%) and Driving (65%).

Females outnumbered males by a ratio of 3 to 1. Cross has found that at all age levels, educational levels, and income levels, female learners outnumbered males and 54% of the courses they take are job related.[9]

Table 4: Reason to Enroll by Sex

	Male	Female
Job related	55.3%	40.1%
Licensure	74.7% — 19.4%	58.1% — 18.0%
Personal development	11.7%	19.3%
Special interest	3.9%	10.1%
Degree or Certificate	4.8%	5.2%
Start school/course	2.0%	4.5%
Recreation	2.9%	2.8%

Education

Educational level was higher at Lakeland than at Lee: Lakeland students more often had bachelor's and graduate degrees, while Lee students with associate degrees were more numerous than those at Lakeland: 11% at Lee and 8% at Lakeland.

Table 5: Highest Degree Held

	Lakeland	Lee
High School	45%	57%
Two Year Associate Degre	8%	11%
Bachelor's Degree	30%	24%
Master's Degree	11%	6%
Ph.D.	1%	1%
Professional (law, medicine, etc.)	3%	1%
Total with one or more degrees	53%	43%

Age

Lakeland students were more widely distributed by age. It should be noted, however, that Lee College Division of Continuing Education has a separate senior citizen program not reflected in these figures. Lee College students responding to this survey tended to range from 29 to 38 years of age. This fact may explain several of the results of the survey: e.g. the greater proportion of Lee students who are interested in job related classes.

Table 6: Age

Age	Lakeland	Lee
17	1%	3%
18-19	1%	13%
20-21	2%	9%
22-28	27%	20%
29-38	26%	49%
39-44	20%	6%
45-50	13%	3%
51+	23%	9%

EMPLOYMENT

The vast majority of the survey group (82.3%) were employed outside the home. Almost 60% are employed 30 or more hours per week. While more Lakeland students indicated that they are not presently employed outside the home (22% compared to 16% at Lee), far more Lakeland

students (62% vs. 27%) are employed 30 or more hours per week, while more Lee students work in temporary, short-term positions e.g. daycare (28% compared to 3% at Lakeland). Lee students employed less than 15 hours per week outnumbered Lakeland students in the same category: 16% vs. 3%; those Lee students employed 16-29 hours per week outnumbered Lakeland students: 10% vs.7% ($p \leq .00001$).

The most typical respondent in this study was 29 years of age or older (70%). Almost half of those surveyed (44.2%) were currently married; slightly more had children (46.9%). More students, by far, preferred classes offered during weekday evenings (43%) than at any other time. The next most popular choice was a distant second for weekends (17.9%), followed by daytime classes during the week (14.6%) and late night during the week after 9:00 p.m. (12.5%).

SUMMARY

Results of this study indicate that for Lakeland College, there is some potential competition proposed by non-credit classes in specific subjects. In other subjects, this is not the case. The philosophy of Lakeland College is for innovative courses to be test marketed through lifelong learning, then to be moved to credit when they are successful.

The philosophy at Lee, reflected in the results here, is to develop courses that, for the most part, cannot be converted to credit classes. Lee students are less interested in credit classes than those at Lakeland. Philosophy is slowly changing with the addition of small business and computer classes in the last three years at Lee. In small business, the demand is not yet sufficient to begin a credit program. It is important to note that a large number of students in computer classes do not desire credit for these classes but did not say they would not take them for credit, either. Factors other than credit are of major importance to these students.

COMPETITION

This study identified potential competition between credit and non-credit programs. It identified some non-credit students who would enroll in credit classes if that were all that were available to them. It did not, however, determine the degree to which some students who are

registered in credit classes, might find a better "fit" for their educational goals and interests in continuing education rather than credit classes. This is an area that needs study.

It is likely that there are some students e.g. in physical education - scuba, racquetball, tennis, dance, etc. or in computer classes who really belong in continuing education and would register if classes were offered on these subjects.

Analysis of those who drop out of credit classes might find a high percentage of students enrolled in these classes with no intention of seeking credit or of completing a whole semester. A bad "fit" may contribute to the high course drop rates at some institutions.

COMPLEMENT

Continuing education was found in this study, to positively affect students' attitudes toward further learning. A large majority indicated increased desire and confidence to learn, as well as their ability to study and learn. This, of course, is self-perception rather than assessment. Yet, motivation has been found to positively affect continued learning. A large majority also said continuing education had increased their curiosity to discover and explore ideas in other courses. Finally, a large majority said non-credit classes had increased the likelihood of their taking credit courses in the future.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

As remedial social programs dominated continuing education in the 1970's, career related programs have dominated the 1980's. The current emphasis on "careerism" is likely to increase in the United States for at least another decade. Yet, when today's 30 to 40 year olds reach their career peaks, they will likely shift their educational interests away from careers to personal, intellectual, spiritual, esthetic and recreational concerns. This will likely cause another major shift in the primary purpose of continuing education at community colleges.

For now, desire for short-term intense instruction in career related topics will dominate the curriculum for many continuing education programs.

To maximize service to this market, better analysis of needs will be necessary. The interactive effects of benefits requires further study, as does the development of sound institutional philosophies regarding how best to serve these students.

With respect to the funding issue, should states subsidize credit instruction for those who already have degrees? California community colleges in 1981 proposed charging students with degrees who were not enrolled as matriculating students (California Community Colleges, 1982). As state funds available for higher education diminish, such issues are likely to arise.

Should continuing education adopt more sophisticated pricing strategies? In the 1970's most continuing education programs tried to minimize costs to students as a reflection of the predominant philosophy of maximizing access to higher education. Break-even pricing was the norm. With today's career emphasis and interest in more expensively produced high technology courses, should community colleges price such offerings to maximize profits? If such strategies are employed, can continuing education bring in revenue equal to that of subsidized classes?

Such issues are rarely discussed at institutions. Institutional policies regarding continuing education tend to evolve, often with little discussion of the underlying philosophy or assessment of the institutional impact of such evolutionary changes. For community colleges to better serve adult students, a more analytical approach would be advantageous.

Footnotes

1. Cross, K. Patricia, Adults As Learners, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1981, p. 202.
2. National Center for Education Statistics, 1983. The Condition of Education: 1983, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C. ED 233 476.
3. Cross, K. Patricia and McCartan, Anne-Marie, Adult Learning: State Policies and Institutional Practices, Association for the Study of Higher Education, Higher Education Research Report No. 1, 1984, p. 33.
4. Cross, Adults As Learners, p. 99.
5. Cross and McCartan, p. 38.
6. Ibid.
7. Cross, Adults As Learners, p. 89.
8. Ibid.
9. Cross and McCartan, p. 6.

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1985-86 Lee College
Continuing Education Survey

Select the answer choice most appropriate for you. You may have more than one response for some items.

_____ 1. Have you taken a course at Lee College before this semester? a.) Yes b.) No
_____ A college credit course? (traditional degree credits awarded) a.) Yes b.) No
_____ A non-credit course? (Continuing Education) a.) Yes b.) No

_____ 2. Reason for enrolling at Lee College most recently:

a.) Job related - professional development
b.) Licensure up-date
c.) Obtain a college degree
d.) Earn a certificate
e.) Personal development
f.) Pursue special interest
g.) Get started in school again
h.) Recreation
i.) Take a course; checked schedule
j.) Special course was offered; Title _____

3. Using the following scale, please rate each of the following items according to its **importance to you in selecting courses** at Lee College

1) Specifically attracted me to Lee College
2) Very important
3) Moderately important
4) Minor importance
5) Unimportant

_____ duration of class (number of weeks/meetings)
_____ location where class meets
_____ earn/maintain credentials, professional up-date
_____ testing process (or no tests)
_____ opportunity to practice going to school again
_____ instructor expectations
_____ instructor reputation
_____ convenience for registering
_____ learning experience
_____ college degree credit (transferable)
_____ grading practices (or no grades)
_____ fee level
_____ special topic/subject matter
_____ media describing this course - brochure
_____ media - newspaper articles
_____ word of mouth (instructor, student)
_____ equipment available - technical training
_____ required by employer
_____ class schedule

_____ 4. How did you first learn about this program at Lee College?

a.) Class Schedule mailed home
b.) Special brochures mailed
c.) Brochure available in community
d.) Teacher/Counselor
e.) Employer
f.) Friend or relative
g.) Lee College Instructor or student
h.) Attending other programs/courses at Lee College
i.) Read about it in newspaper, heard on radio, TV, etc.
j.) Other _____

_____ 5. If you have taken non-credit, Continuing Education courses before this semester, approximately how many non-credit courses have you taken?

a.) None b.) 1 c.) 2-3 d.) 4-6 e.) 9+ courses

_____ 6. If you have taken credit courses at Lee College before this semester, approximately how many credit hours have you taken?

a.) None b.) Less than 15 credits c.) 16-45 credits d.) 46 or more credits

_____ 7. If you have enrolled in both credit and non-credit **classes at Lee College**, do you remember which you took first?

a.) Yes, credit b.) Yes, non-credit c.) Both together d.) No

_____ 8. What kind(s) of **non-credit** course(s) are you taking now?

_____ a.) Small Business/Professional Development (non-computer courses)
_____ b.) Computer Related
_____ c.) Cooking
_____ d.) Office skills (typing, bookkeeping, stenoscript)
_____ e.) Spanish
_____ f.) Dancing
_____ g.) Day-Care
_____ h.) Driving
_____ i.) Exercise (including water exercise)
_____ j.) Swimming
_____ k.) Personal Development
_____ l.) Other _____

(over)

_____ 9.) If the Continuing Education course in which you are enrolled was **only** offered as a college credit course would you have taken the course?
a.) Yes b.) No c.) Maybe

_____ 10. Has your non-credit experience increased your confidence in your ability to study and learn?
a.) Yes, a great deal b.) Yes, somewhat c.) No, not at all d.) No opinion

_____ 11. Has your non-credit experience increased your curiosity to discover/explore ideas in other courses?
a.) Yes b.) No c.) Maybe

_____ 12. After your experience in this non-credit course or workshop, will you be more likely to enroll in college credit courses in the future?
a.) Yes b.) No c.) Maybe

_____ 13. Are you also enrolled in a college credit course this semester?
a.) Yes b.) No
If yes: What kind of credit courses are you taking now? _____

If no: Did you check the schedule of credit courses offered this semester? a.) Yes b.) No

_____ Did you consider enrolling in a credit course offered this semester? a.) Yes b.) No

_____ 14. Are you interested in other kinds of courses currently offered at Lee College? a.) Yes b.) No
List those of most interest to you:

_____ 15. As you consider future semesters at Lee College would you enroll in a course of interest to you if it is only offered for college credit?
a.) Yes b.) No c.) Maybe

_____ 16. Will you take another non-credit course after this semester? a.) Yes b.) No c.) Don't know

_____ 17. Present employment status:
a.) Not employed outside the home b.) Employed less than 15 hrs./week c.) Employed 16-29 hrs./week
d.) Employed 30 or more hrs./week e.) Work in temporary short-term positions

_____ 18. If employed, what is your current occupation? _____

_____ 19. Indicate the highest degree you hold:
a.) High school graduate b.) 2 year Associate degree c.) Bachelor's degree d.) Master's degree
e.) Ph.D. f.) Professional (Law, Medicine, etc.) g.) Number of college credit hours earned is _____

_____ 20. Sex: a.) Male b.) Female

_____ 21. Age: a.) 17 and under b.) 18-19 c.) 20-21 d.) 22-28 e.) 29-38
f.) 39-44 g.) 45-50 h.) 51 and over

_____ 22. Marital status:
a.) Married, no children b.) Married, with children c.) Single, no children d.) Single, with children

_____ 23. Time of day you would prefer to attend class:
a.) Day time during week b.) Eve. during week c.) Week-end d.) Early morning during week before 9:00 a.m.
e.) Late night during week after 9:00 p.m. f.) No preference

_____ 24. Do you intend to take credit courses in the future? a.) Yes b.) No c.) Maybe
_____ Will you consider it? a.) Yes b.) No c.) Don't know

_____ 25. List any other ideas for courses not currently offered that would interest you.

Please return to: Lee College, Continuing Education, P.O. Box 818, Baytown, Texas 77522

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